

Victorian Servants KS2

Story and Reading Comprehension (Levelled)



Dear Florence

Dear Florence

Level Three



January 1897

Dear Florence,

Sister, I have news! Tuesday last, I applied for a role as a housemaid at the grandest of houses, Preston Manor in the town of Brighton. As you are aware, I have long awaited the chance to go into service at a fine home, and I am delighted to tell you I have been appointed to the position.

The butler, Mr Beesley, is a kindly gentleman who does not shout at us, but he runs the house with a firm hand and does not stand for any nonsense. Miss Ada is a straightforward woman but has a warmth about her that reassures me, and she was impressed when I showed her how quickly I can stitch a seam during my interview.

I am to present myself at 6am sharp on Sunday. I have a touch of nerves about me, for leaving Mother and Father at home in Newhaven will wrench my heart, and I will

miss our brother Thomas greatly, and Dickens the horse of course. I have left him in Thomas' care.

I am glad that I will still have the sea air about me and am grateful to not be venturing too far from our family, but having never left home before, I know I will have to be very brave and not cry or complain or be lonely. Instead, I shall count my blessings and keep you all in my prayers every night.

Brighton is so busy and different to what I know, but the splendour of the Royal Pavilion made my breath catch in my throat. What a treat to be in a town where such a thing exists!

It will take some time for me to get used to such an unusual place, but I believe I will be quite fine once I am settled, so please do not fret. I will write again next week when I have my wages and can buy some more postage stamps.

Your loving sister,

Clara

Dear Florence

Level Two



January 1897

Dear Florence,

Sister, I have news! Last Tuesday, I applied for a job as a housemaid at a grand house, Preston Manor in Brighton. As you know, I have long waited for the chance to go into service at such a fine home, and I am delighted to tell you I have been given the job.

The butler, Mr Beesley, is a kind gentleman who does not shout at us, but he runs the house with a firm hand and does like any nonsense. Miss Ada is a strict woman but has a warmth about her that I like, and she was impressed when I showed her how quickly I can sew during my interview.

I am to arrive at 6am sharp on Sunday. I am a little nervous, for leaving Mother and Father at home in Newhaven will hurt my heart, and I will miss our brother Thomas a lot, and Dickens the horse of course. I have left him in Thomas' care.

I am glad that I will still have the sea air to breathe and am grateful to not be going too far from our family, but having never left home before, I know I will have to be very brave and not cry or complain or be lonely. Instead, I will count my blessings and keep you all in my prayers every night.

Brighton is so busy and different to what I know, but the sight of the Royal Pavilion made me gasp. What a treat to be in a town where such a thing is!

It will take some time for me to get used to such an unusual place, but I believe I will be quite fine once I am settled, so please do not worry. I will write again next week when I have my money and can buy some more postage stamps.

Your loving sister,

Clara

Dear Florence

Level One



January 1897

Dear Florence,

Sister, I have news! On Tuesday, I applied for a job as a housemaid at a big house, Preston Manor in Brighton. As you know, I have always wanted to work at such a nice home, and I am so happy to tell you I have been given the job.

The butler, Mr Beesley, is a kind man who does not shout at us, but he does not like anyone being lazy. Miss Ada is a strict woman but has a nice way about her that I like, and she was pleased when I showed her how quickly I can sew.

I am to arrive at 6am on Sunday. I am a bit nervous, for leaving Mother and Father at home in Newhaven will make me sad, and I will miss our brother Thomas a lot, and Dickens the horse of course. I have left him for Thomas to look after.

I am happy that I will still have the sea air to breathe, and it is nice to not be going too far from our family, but I have never left home before, and I know I will have to be

very brave and not cry or moan or be lonely. Instead, I will count my blessings and keep you all in my prayers every night.

Brighton is so busy and different to what I know, but the sight of the Royal Pavilion made me so happy. It is so wonderful to be in a town where there is a palace!

It will take some time for me to get used to such an unusual place, but I think I will be quite fine once I am settled in, so please do not worry. I will write again next week when I have my money and can buy some more postage stamps.

Your loving sister,

Clara

Comprehension Questions – Dear Florence

Level Three



1. What do you think Clara means by “going into service?”
2. How does Clara describe Mr Beesley?
3. What was Miss Ada impressed by?
4. Why do you think Clara is nervous about leaving her family behind?
5. Why does Clara say she has to be brave?
6. What “S” word does Clara use to describe the Royal Pavilion?
7. Why do you think Clara’s breath “catches in her throat,” when she sees the Royal Pavilion?
8. What will Clara do when she gets her wages?
9. What is Clara going to count?
10. What do you think Clara means by the word “fret”?

Comprehension Questions – Dear Florence

Level Two



1. How is Clara related to Florence?
2. When did Clara apply for the job?
3. What is the job?
4. Clara describes Preston Manor as “grand.” What do you think she means by this?
5. What is Mr Beesley’s job?
6. Where did Clara live before moving to Brighton for work?
7. Who is Dickens?
8. Fill in the blank. Clara is grateful she will have the _____ to breathe.
9. How does Clara describe Brighton?
10. When does Clara say she will write to Florence again?

Comprehension Questions – Dear Florence

Level One



1. What is the name of the house where Clara has a job?
2. On what day of the week did Clara apply for the job?
3. Fill in the blank. Miss Ada is a _____ woman.
4. What does Mr Beesley not like?
5. What time is Clara going to arrive at the house?
6. What is the horse's name?
7. What is Clara's brother's name?
8. Has Clara ever left home before?
9. What is the palace called?
10. What will Clara buy more of next week?

Dear Florence – Glossary

Housemaid

A type of servant who worked in Victorian homes. They kept the house clean and tidy and did many different jobs to keep the home running smoothly, such as dusting, polishing, scrubbing the floors, cleaning and lighting the fires.

Preston Manor

An old manor house in Brighton, for many years the home of the wealthy Thomas-Stanford family and their servants. Now part of the Royal Pavilion & Brighton Museums Trust, and open for people to visit and learn about the past.

Service

To 'go into service' meant to become a domestic servant in a home. A housemaid, butler and oddman are types of domestic servants.

Butler

An important male servant who was in charge of the other servants. The butler served during meals, looked after expensive items, such as wine and silver, and made sure the house was locked and safe at night.

Newhaven

A town east of Brighton

Royal Pavilion

A palace in Brighton built on the orders of George, Prince of Wales, who later became King George IV. He wanted it as a place to stay while on holiday in Brighton. It is very famous as it is unusual and interesting.

Wages

Money paid regularly to somebody who does a job.

Postage stamps

A small piece of paper, often with a picture of a king or queen on it, that you put on an envelope in order to send a letter in the post.